

**REMARKS**

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the Office Action are respectfully requested in view of this amendment and the following reasons. By this amendment, claims 1, 7, and 9 have been amended, and claims 5, 6, 8, and 21 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Accordingly, claims 1-4, 7, and 9-20 are pending in this application.

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the features of claims 5, 6, 8, and 21. Claims 7 and 9 have been amended to make proper reference to claim 1. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the above amendments introduce no new matter within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §132. For at least these reasons, entry of the present Amendment is therefore respectfully requested. Accordingly, Applicant requests reconsideration and timely withdrawal of the pending rejections for the reasons discussed below.

***Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102***

Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 8, 11-14, 16, 20, and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,902,148 issued to O'Rourke ("O'Rourke").

Claims 5, 6, 8, and 21 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, thereby rendering the rejection of these claims moot. With respect to claims 1-3, 11-14, 16, and 21, Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection for at least the following reasons.

Applicant respectfully submits that the rejections of independent claim 1 must be withdrawn because the Office Action fails to establish a *prima facie* case of anticipation.

“Anticipation requires the disclosure in a single prior art reference of each element of the claim under consideration.” *W.L. Gore & Assocs. V. Garlock*, 721 F.2d 1540, 220 USPQ 303 (Fed. Cir. 1983), cert. denied, 469 U.S. 851 (1984). Further, “when evaluating the scope of a claim, every limitation in the claim must be considered. U.S.P.T.O. personnel may not dissect a claimed invention into discrete elements and then evaluate the elements in isolation. Instead, the claim as a whole must be considered.” *U.S.P.T.O. Interim Guidelines for Examination of Patent Applications for Patent Subject Matter Eligibility*, page 9, October 26, 2005. As the Federal Circuit stated, “[a]nticipation requires the presence in a single prior art reference disclosure of each and every element of the claimed invention, arranged as in the claim.” *Lindemann Maschinenfabrik GmbH v. American Hoist & Derrick Col.*, 730 F.2d 1452, 221 USPQ 481, 485 (Fed. Cir. 1984) (citing *Connell v. Sears, Roebuck & Co.*, 722 F.2d 1542, 220 USPQ 193 (Fed. Cir. 1983)).

The present subject matter is directed to a flexible multi-socket assembly including a plug unit operatively connected to a plurality of socket units separated by flexible “bridges” and an additional socket unit integral with the plug unit. The assembly is formed as a continuous, unitary, *integrally molded body* of a suitable electrically insulating material(s) that encapsulates the electrical connections between the plug unit and the at least one socket unit. The assembly is of integral construction, i.e., the pins, the connectors, and the conductors are embedded in an integral body of one or more non-electrically conducting encapsulating material, such as for example a plastic or rubber material, of appropriate shape. As disclosed in the application, the electrical connections, i.e., the conductors (112, 213, 314), are spaced apart and incased in

parallel along the axes (100, 200, 300) in a suitable electrically insulating material(s). This form of construction enables the multi-socket assembly to be manufactured in a relatively simple manner, since the connections between the pins, conductors, and connectors for each of the ground, phase, and neutral lines can be automated in a simple manner, and then the material can be added, for example, by casting in a mold suitably prepared with these electrical elements. The flexible “bridges” are of sufficient length such as to enable socket unit(s) to be aligned over the plug unit to provide a compact configuration (*See*, e.g., Fig. 5). The assembly further includes locking means to reversibly lock the socket unit(s) with respect to the plug unit when in the compact configuration. The locking means may for example comprise mutually engageable male and female elements (62, 64), each comprised on facing surfaces of the plug unit and the socket unit(s) when in compact configuration.

In view of the present subject matter described above, Applicant respectfully submits that O’Rourke fails to disclose, teach, or suggest every recited feature of claim 1.

Claim 1, as amended, now specifically relates to a flexible multi-socket assembly comprising a plug unit operatively connected to a plurality of socket units separated by flexible “bridges” and an additional socket unit integral with the plug unit. The assembly is formed as a unitary, *integrally molded body* of a suitable electrically insulating material(s) that encapsulates the aligned in a spaced apart and parallel configuration electrical connections between the plug unit and the at least one socket unit.

In contrast, O’Rourke discloses an extension cord having multiple (grouped or individual) female sockets disposed at intervals along the cord. However, O’Rourke does not disclose, teach,

or suggest a continuous, unitary and *flexible* multi-socket assembly comprising a plug unit operatively connected to a plurality of socket units separated by flexible “bridges” and *an additional socket unit integral with the plug unit which is also adapted to be folded into a compact configuration* by aligning a socket unit over the plug unit (e.g., as illustrated in Fig. 5). Moreover, O’Rourke does not describe an assembly comprising locking means to reversibly lock the socket unit(s) with respect to the plug unit. Furthermore, O’Rourke neither discloses nor suggests that electrical connections, i.e. the conducting wires (14a-14g) are incased in parallel along the entire length of the extension cord in a suitable electrically insulating material. Rather, as seen in Fig. 2a for example, O’Rourke’s wires are not parallel along the length of the cord, the wires are rather parallel along certain portions thereof and are grouped into a bundle for example when in the male plug (12).

Because O’Rourke fails to disclose, teach, or suggest every feature as recited, it does not anticipate claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. §102(b) rejection of claim 1. Claims 2, 3, 11-14, 16, and 21 depend from claim 1 and are allowable for at least this reason. Since none of the other prior art of record discloses or suggests all the features of the claimed subject matter, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 1, and all the claims that depend therefrom, are allowable.

### ***Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103***

Claims 4, 9, 10, 15, and 17-19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly

unpatentable over O'Rourke in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,788,521 issued to Milan ("Milan").

Claims 4, 9, 10, 15, and 17-19 depend from claim 1, and Milan fails to cure the deficiencies of O'Rourke noted above with regard to claim 1. Specifically, Milan also fails to disclose, teach, or suggest a *flexible and integrally molded* multi-socket assembly comprising a *plug unit integrally formed with a first socket unit and at least one additional socket unit electrically connected to the plug unit, each being formed as blocks interconnected by a flexible bridge and the assembly being adapted to be folded into a compact configuration by aligning at least one socket unit block over the plug unit block*. Hence, claims 4, 9, 10, 15, and 17-19 are allowable at least because they depend from allowable claim 1.

In addition to the above reason, claims 4, 9, 10, 15, and 17-19 are allowable further in view of the following reasons.

As mentioned above, O'Rourke discloses an extension cord having multiple (grouped or individual) female sockets disposed at intervals along the cord. Thus, it is not obvious to one of skill in the art that in light of O'Rourke to construct a *flexible and integrally molded* multi-socket assembly comprising a *plug unit integrally formed with a first socket unit and at least one additional socket unit electrically connected to the plug unit, each being formed as blocks interconnected by a flexible bridge and the assembly being adapted to be folded into a compact configuration by aligning at least one socket unit block over the plug unit block*. Moreover, O'Rourke does not teach or suggest an assembly comprising locking means to reversibly lock the socket unit(s) with respect to the plug unit when in the compact configuration. Nor does O'Rourke disclose that electrical connections, i.e. the conducting wires (14a-14g) are incased in

parallel along the entire length of the extension cord in a suitable electrically insulating material.

On the other hand, Milan discloses surge protection systems of a modular nature. Particularly, Milan deals with a surge protection system having several types of modules which are quickly and easily *connected* and *disconnected* in any desired order by virtue of quick connect means provided on the modules. More particularly, Milan deals with a modular surge protection system wherein surge protection modules which provide surge protection to ground may be interchangeable with surge protection modules having surge protection between hot or live and neutral.

Thus, a combination of Milan and O'Rourke does not render the present subject matter obvious to a skilled artisan as even the combination of these two documents would not lead her to construct a *flexible and integrally molded* multi-socket assembly comprising a *plug unit integrally formed with a first socket unit and at least one additional socket unit electrically connected to the plug unit, each being formed as blocks interconnected by a flexible bridge and the assembly being adapted to be folded into a compact configuration by aligning at least one socket unit block over the plug unit block*, as required by the subject matter.

Claim 7 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over O'Rourke in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,072,376 issued to Shannon ("Shannon").

Claim 7 depends from claim 1, and Shannon fails to cure the deficiencies of O'Rourke noted above with regard to claim 1. Particularly, Shannon also fails to disclose, teach, or suggest a *flexible and integrally molded* multi-socket assembly comprising a *plug unit integrally formed*

*with a first socket unit and at least one additional socket unit electrically connected to the plug unit, each being formed as blocks interconnected by a flexible bridge and the assembly being adapted to be folded into a compact configuration by aligning at least one socket unit block over the plug unit block.* Hence, claim 7 is allowable at least because it depends from allowable claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection of claim 1. Claims 4, 7, 9, 10, 15, and 17-19 depend from claim 1 and are allowable for at least this reason. Since none of the other prior art of record, whether taken alone or in any combination, discloses or suggests all the features of the claimed subject matter, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 1, and all the claims that depend therefrom, are allowable.

**CONCLUSION**

Applicant believes that a full and complete response has been made to the pending Office Action and respectfully submits that all of the stated grounds for rejection have been overcome or rendered moot. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that all pending claims are allowable and that the application is in condition for allowance.

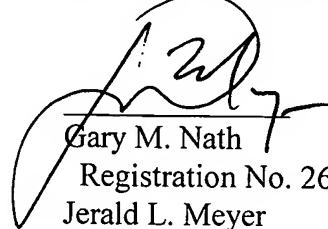
Should the Examiner feel that there are any issues outstanding after consideration of this response, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the number below to expedite prosecution.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Reply is respectfully requested.

May 16, 2008

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